

**RICHMOND, IN** - Congressman Pence held a town hall meeting in Richmond at Reid Hospital this morning. The *Richmond Palladium-Item* was there:



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['I'm very moved by your passion'](#)

After 17-year-old disagrees with Mike Pence's stance on health care bill at town hall meeting, many thank him for his courage

By Rachel E. Sheeley  
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Many leaving Mike Pence's town hall meeting on health care Saturday stopped to pat 17-year-old Neal Werle on the shoulder, to thank him for speaking during the meeting and to thank him for his courage.

Werle was clearly nervous as he got up to speak to Pence, the Sixth District representative to Congress, during the town hall meeting in the Lingle Auditorium at Reid Hospital.

He wanted to share the story of how his father, who had been self-employed, was denied health

insurance because he took an anti-depressant. Werle said his father had to give up his own business and go to work for someone else to get health insurance again.

Werle said a public health care system such as the one proposed in the current bill would not deny his father and that it is worth supporting for just those reasons. He cited the public health care systems of European countries as good examples.

Werle told Pence that he didn't believe the Republicans had stepped up to fix health care or find a middle ground on the issue.

"I'm very moved by your passion about your father's situation," Pence told Werle. He added that Republicans have offered alternatives to the bill and that the day after current legislation is defeated, he and others will begin working for health care insurance reforms.

After the meeting, Werle said he appreciated the audience members' support of him voicing his opinions, but he still didn't agree with the majority of audience members whose applause seemed to favor Pence's mission to vote down the current health insurance bill before the House of Representatives.

"I don't think we're going to get anything better," Werle said. "I think it's now or never."

Werle said that when President Barack Obama's administration and supporters first came out with the idea of health care reform, the goal was clear. However, he said the "spin" around the bill has damaged it and labeling the program "socialism" has scared people.

He said he admires that Democrats are independent thinkers, but believes that also hinders them when it comes time to work together.

Werle also said he believes Pence wants to help people like his father, but his fear is that the Republicans will let the bill to die and there will be a long wait for another effort.

During the meeting, Pence said Republicans are proposing health care reforms that would:

Allow Americans to purchase health insurance plans from across state lines;

Include tort reforms to make it less costly for doctors and hospitals to do business;

Block grants that would be issued to states to help people who cannot otherwise get insurance.

Pence told the audience that he doesn't think the Democrats have enough votes in the House to pass the health care bill or he would be in Washington voting, not in Indiana talking to constituents.

"This is now in the hands of the American people," said Pence, who is from Columbus and represents Wayne County. "They don't have the votes, so you're still in charge."

He said he doesn't favor the current health care bill because it would lead to deep cuts in the Medicare Advantage program, provide government funding for abortions and eliminate the incentive for employers to offer insurance to their employees.

Cora Stamper King said that many of her questions, including how the bill would affect small business owners who offer their employees health care, were answered by Pence. She works with her brother, who employs and insures about 20 people in his small business

"This moves me because it would hurt our employees to go to a different (government) plan," King said.

King said she had never heard Pence in person but now supports him and hopes he can stop the current health care bill from passing.

Additional Facts

Fast Facts

The Palladium-Item broadcast Mike Pence's town hall meeting live Saturday morning. It was attended by 150-plus area residents. Watch it [HERE](#) .